

His Worship Jim Watson
Mayor of the City of Ottawa
Office of the Mayor
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON K1P 1J1

Dear Mr. Mayor:

These are immensely trying times for our city and country, and I fully appreciate the many competing priorities and the immense pressure you and your team have been under for the past several weeks.

I have been deeply concerned by events at and the treatment of the National War Memorial and the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument since the beginning of the convoy protests. And while I acknowledge that both memorials are in the middle of multiple protest zones, and that site security cannot be addressed in isolation, I am requesting that you redouble efforts to ensure that the National War Memorial and the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument are more appropriately protected by the Ottawa Police Service.

Like many Canadians, I was particularly alarmed this weekend as protestors were allowed to remove the protective fencing that had been erected to protect the National War Memorial. As you know, the National War Memorial is sacred ground. Not only is it home to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, but it is also the place where Corporal Nathan Cirillo tragically lost his life during a domestic act of terror on October 22, 2014. Even if the intent of the protestors was peaceful and they intended to honour the site, I am concerned that the Ottawa Police Service allowed the protective fencing to be removed so easily in the first place.

During the first weekend of the ongoing protest, the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument was also the site of unacceptable behaviour and recipient of disrespectful treatment. I am concerned by an apparent lack of meaningful security at both of these historic and culturally significant sites.

I appreciate that Confederation Square and Confederation Park are federal properties and that the Government of Canada shares responsibility for their care with the City of Ottawa. I ask that in light of the importance of these locations to Veterans, members of the armed forces, and to our collective national history, additional Ottawa Police Service resources be dedicated immediately to protecting these hallowed grounds.

Sincerely yours,

The Honourable Anita Anand, PC, MP
Minister of National Defence